

## Ecclesiastical

### MINISTERIAL EDUCATION AND RELIEF.

#### Abstract of Fifth Annual Report.

The Executive Committee of Ministerial Education and Relief respectfully presents to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States its annual report for the year, from April 1, 1908, to March 31, 1909.

This is the fifth annual report of the consolidated committee, comprising the forty-eighth annual report of the Executive Committee of Education for the Ministry, which was organized in 1861; and the eighth annual report of the Executive Committee of Ministerial Relief, which was organized in 1901, to take up the work of the "Invalid Fund," which had been in the charge of the Home Mission Committee since 1867.

#### Financial Statement.

From April 1, 1908, to March 31, 1909, the receipts at our office were as follows: Ministerial Education, \$25,706.61; Ministerial Relief, \$35,034.71; Endowment Fund of Ministerial Relief, \$36,524.62. The receipts for all causes for the year were \$98,265.97.

While our work has been continually expanding and bringing better returns in every way, it is a matter of great pleasure to your Committee that the office expenses have not been materially increased. The office expenses for both causes for the year have been 8.1 per cent of the receipts, making the average cost to each cause a little more than four per cent.

God is hearing and answering the prayers of His church. Last May the Presbyteries reported to the General Assembly 375 candidates for the ministry, an increase of forty over the previous year. January 1, 1909, the stated clerks reported to us 422 candidates, a further increase of forty-seven over the report to the Assembly in May, 1908.

The need is still very great. In 1894 we had one candidate to every 447 of our members; in 1901, one to every 797; in 1908, one to every 716. While the improvement since 1901 is gratifying, it is far from what is desired or demanded by our ever-increasing responsibility both at home and abroad.

Last year eleven Presbyteries with 333 churches and 22,240 communicants reported to the General Assembly, no candidates for the ministry.

#### Aid For Prospective Medical Missionaries.

Being advised by the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions that there is urgent need for an increase in the number of those who are preparing themselves to serve the church as medical missionaries in foreign lands, and having received request from one of our Presbyteries to aid a young man who had been examined and received as a candidate for the ministry, but who intends to go as a medical missionary, your committee made a loan of \$100 to him on the same conditions that loans are now made to candidates.

We request the Assembly for information to guide us in answering future requests for aid to prospective medical missionaries who have the endorsement

of Presbyteries and the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions.

#### The Number of Candidates.

Last year the Presbyteries reported to the General Assembly 375 candidates for the ministry, an increase of forty over the previous year. January 1, 1909, the stated clerks reported to us 422 candidates, a further increase of forty-seven over the report of the Assembly in May, 1908. We have been able to secure information concerning 414 of these.

Of the 414 candidates, 137 are in the seminary, 190 in college, 33 in schools and academies, while 54 for the present are at work.

Of the 137 in the theological seminaries, 42 are in the third year class, 36 in the second, and 59 in the first.

Of the 190 in college, 3 are post graduates, 46 are in the senior class, 30 in the junior, 59 in the sophomore, and 52 in the freshman.

#### Whence They Come.

We have learned the occupation of the fathers of 392 of our candidates. Of these, 197 have fathers who are farmers, 56 are the sons of ministers, 34 of merchants, 18 of laborers, 12 of carpenters, 8 of physicians, 8 of manufacturers, 8 of traveling salesmen, 7 of professors, 6 of lawyers, 5 of bankers, 4 of druggists, 4 of mill men, 3 of insurance men, 3 of railroad men, 3 of newspaper men, and 3 of real estate men, while the remaining 13 are the sons of men engaged in 11 different occupations.

#### Country Churches.

The important bearing of the country church on the problem of ministerial supply is clearly revealed by the investigations of your committee.

Of 392 candidates now enrolled in our Presbyteries, more than one-half (197) are the sons of farmers. This is a matter of remarkable significance when we remember that our church is not a church of the country, but rather of the towns and cities. Of 410 candidates reporting, 185 came from country churches and 107 from churches where services were conducted only twice a month, and 79 only monthly. One hundred and seventy-seven of these candidates came from churches with a membership of one hundred members or less.

The Synods of North Carolina and Virginia, which have a much larger proportion of rural churches than any of the other Synods, reported to the last Assembly 143 candidates, which was 38 per cent of the number reported from the whole church (375). We find that of 1,183 ministers of our church whose names and places of nativity appear in the Ministerial Directory of our church, published in 1898, Virginia, North and South Carolina furnished 37 per cent.

In view of these facts, it is a cause for grave concern that more than 600 of the feeble churches of our Assembly are now pastorless. Reports which have come to our office, reveal the fact that 200 vacant fields, composed of from 1 to 7 churches, which are able with the aid of Presbyterial, Synodical or General Assembly's home mission aid to support a pastor, have no one to minister to them.

Of 410 candidates enrolled in the Presbyteries at this time, 287 decided to enter the ministry before they entered college.

Of 412 candidates, 49 were admitted to communion at ten years of age or under, 243 between the years of eleven

and fifteen, inclusive, 103 between sixteen and twenty, 13 between twenty-one and twenty-five, and 4 between twenty-six and thirty.

Of 410 candidates reporting, 48 felt the call of God to the ministry and decided to give their lives to the work under the age of ten years, 35 between eleven and fifteen, 227 between sixteen and twenty, 39 between twenty-one and twenty-five, 21 between twenty-six and thirty, 7 between thirty-one and thirty-five, and 3 between thirty-six and forty years.

Of 88 candidates of our church who decided while in college, to enter the ministry, 58 were in our own Presbyterian colleges, 6 in colleges under Presbyterian influence, 2 in Presbyterian colleges, U. S. A., 2 in Methodist, 2 in non-sectarian, 1 in Lutheran and 1 in Reform, while 16 were in state institutions.

A pure Christian atmosphere is also greatly to be desired in order that the decisions formed at home may be maintained. Often the influence of college life tends to draw away from the purposes formed in the more congenial atmosphere of the home.

#### The State Institutions.

Complying with the direction of the last Assembly we have given careful attention to the Presbyterian students in the state colleges and universities.

We find that in 26 state institutions scattered throughout all of our Synods, there are 13,325 students of whom 2,179 are Presbyterians or prefer the Presbyterian Church. Twenty of these institutions have been visited by the secretary. In all of them, with two exceptions, the claims of the ministry have been presented the past year.

The presidents, many of them active officers in one of the evangelical churches, seem deeply interested in the spiritual welfare of the students. Most of the faculties are composed of men of high Christian standing—many of them officers in our own church.

One danger confronts our church in the course of study, which is becoming so popular in the high schools and colleges of the land—the substitution of the scientific for the classical course. In a very few instances, the chair of philosophy is filled by men of rather rationalistic views.

#### Financial Assistance.

We are furnishing aid this year to 268 candidates, as against 240 last year. This is the largest number of candidates assisted by our church in any previous year in her history. The next greatest number received aid in 1893, when 261 were on our rolls.

The amount forwarded this year was \$26,473.70, as against \$24,365.12 last year, which was more than \$2,000 in excess of any amount paid previous to that time.

The maximum amount of appropriation continues to be \$100 per year to each candidate who needs that amount. Almost every candidate requested the full amount. This is due in part to the fact that living expenses have been greatly increased, and many of the students were unable to secure profitable employment last summer.

We earnestly urge each candidate who has a sufficient income or whose parents are able to pay the full cost of his preparation not to call upon the committee for aid.